

## BLM/RAC Sub-Committee Meeting

November 16, 2011

11:00am-2:00pm

Utah Department of Agriculture and Food  
350 N Redwood Road (Second Floor Conference Room)

**RAC members in attendance:** Bill Hopkin, Paul Jacobs, Dell LeFevre, Riley Cutler, and Frank White

**Others in attendance:** Therese Aschkenase (UDAF Secretary)

**Next meeting date:** January 28, 2011 in Salt Lake City, UT

### **Welcome (Bill Hopkin):**

All 3 major biological systems in Utah are currently imbalanced: Desert (cheat grass), mid-elevation (pinion juniper), high-elevation (conifers crowding out aspens and using up too much water). Public lands are not currently economically sustainable because of litigation (NEPA, for example).

The decline in mule deer, sheep, and sage grouse are all correlated. Deer were lost partially due to the decline in sheep in Utah: 1901/2.88 million sheep, 1930ish/2.2 million sheep, 1960/1.2 million sheep, 2010/220,000 sheep. Sage grouse and mule deer were at their highest populations around 1960. The vegetation has shifted and is not favorable to sage grouse and mule deer partially because those AUMs have gone to elk and cattle.

### **Review of Rich County Project Power Point:**

Producers have supported the Rich County Project. NEPA will begin and a private contractor will do the work (16 month contract). \$250,000.00 is currently being spent on water development that had previous NEPA clearance. This project can be used as an example for other public lands. It was suggested that Riley Cutler and Frank White go to Rich County and meet with producers to get a feel for the recreational opportunity that will be enhanced by the project. One of the big concerns is acquiring money for ongoing maintenance of the necessary infrastructure (mostly fence and water development).

### **How do we make a plan like this productive and attractive to the recreation community?**

Use the Rich County project as a pilot project to show how well it works. The benefits of managed grazing and the notion that proper livestock management can improve wildlife habitat and recreational opportunity needs to be communicated to the public. We need to demonstrate the benefits to the recreation community, and to organizations who might have a vested interest (for example; Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, Utah Environmental Congress). Most people have no idea of the benefits of well managed grazing to wildlife and over-all watershed health.

There is a need for communication, involvement, and input from the recreation community. The agriculture community needs to collaborate with landowners, the public, and the recreation community. Abuse occurs in both the agricultural and recreation communities, so it is necessary to get together to prevent and address problems. Partnerships need to be developed in areas where work is being done so people can work together and know who to talk to when there are problems. For example, bikers can work with cattlemen to determine where they can ride. Strong networking will be useful to fight appeals as well.



A common sense management plan needs to be created. The plan could include designated use zones, controlled access, and fee areas. Liability issues need to be taken into account, and kiosks at access areas could be manned by different organizations. Those kiosks should contain maps and information that shows where cattle are running and when. People can be encouraged and informed where to/not to go, be reminded to shut gates, and should be welcomed to the area. Multiple compatible activities should be promoted (geocaching, for example).

Signage should be used to inform people which areas currently have cattle. Trails should be marked, and fees or limited entry to public areas are an option. If fees are charged, it is important to make sure the results of the fees are visible to the paying public. The goal would be a self-sustaining enterprise. Because controlled access can be expensive, involving multiple enterprises is necessary to get a return on investment.

Education is also necessary for both recreation users and permittees so that recreators will have the knowledge to care for the land, and to show permittees that it is possible to allow controlled recreation without damages. Organizations can help with the education process. For example, motorcycle shops should provide riders with maps and information on where to ride. This will also help with self-policing of interest groups.

While some people like the idea of something being managed and protected, this idea goes against the mentality of the West, so developing effective education efforts is critical in changing the paradigm.

**Discuss ways to generate productive involvement from the list created this morning:**

The Rich County Project needs to get as much publicity as possible. The presentation needs to be shortened to 10-15 minutes, and shown to as many groups as possible to show them how the plan helps them (better fishing, better recreation, cattle can remain on range, available camping, reduce conflict). People who care about clean water, wildlife, and recreation will most benefit from the plan.

Riley Cutler and Frank White have offered to help arrange some of the presentations. Possible venues for the presentation include: county commission meetings, the internet, horsemen and cattlemen's associations, Outdoor Retailer (to get in front of outdoor industry groups), non-motorized recreation groups, the oil and gas industry, USA-ALL, USU, angling associations, TNC, BLM, etc. It was also recommended that Bill Hopkin create a DVD presentation to hand out.

It was suggested that Bill Hopkin meet with a marketing agency to discuss methods of promotion, and to get the appropriate people to promote him. This project would reach a broader audience if television media could be developed for it. Chad Booth from "At Your Leisure" should be contacted for help with the footage. Other regional broadcasts should be investigated.

Partnerships need to be formed to solicit funds. It was suggested that the state parks become involved in order to get license fees from off-road recreational activities (and they pass out maps).

**Public comments:** none, there was no general public attendance.

Meeting adjourned 2:00pm

Approved:  
Bill Hopkin

  
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Bill Hopkin, RAC Chairperson

Date:  
11/16/2010

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RAC Sub-Committee Chairperson